

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 24, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama
President, United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

As the elected representatives of Alaska in the Congress, we are writing in response to a letter you received from Members of the House of Representatives urging immediate action on the Arctic. We are acutely aware of the resource management issues and the economic challenges facing our state. We are also aware of the meaning our great state holds for the rest of the country, but to us, Alaska is more than just an environmental symbol. It is where we live, work and raise our families.

With that unique perspective in mind, we respectfully request a meeting with you to discuss Alaska's management of the Arctic.

The delegation acknowledges the significant amount of federal lands in Alaska and the federal waters off our shores. Alaska has been a good partner in the management of our natural resources on these lands and waters and has provided much to our nation in regards to energy and fisheries.

Alaska is feeling the impacts of climate change and these changes are occurring in the Arctic. It is because of the impacts in the Arctic that we are working proactively with federal and state agencies to determine the best way to protect this unique ecosystem. But we believe that responsible development and protection of the Arctic can continue to co-exist.

From closing all federal waters of the Arctic to commercial fishing while we gather more information, to the benefits of directional drilling and the scientific management of subsistence whaling, Alaska has carefully managed our natural resources.


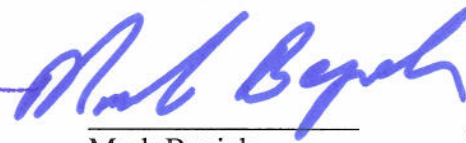

The fact that a majority of Alaskans support oil and gas development in the Arctic must not be overlooked. We ask that you take into account the wishes of all Alaskans when making a decision about activity in the Arctic. The North Slope oil fields were developed in 1977 and we have been supplying the United States with a secure source of oil ever since. The lessons we learned with the tragic oil spill of the Exxon Valdez have led to the development of one of the safest oil transportation systems in the world.

We, the elected representatives of Alaska, write to encourage you not to take any rash actions in regard to our state. Such actions could harm the nation's economic recovery and our shared goal of increasing the nation's energy independence.

The Alaska delegation has taken the lead in protecting the Arctic and promoting conservation efforts using the best available science. Far too often though, talk of implementing "science-based precautionary management" in the Arctic is in reality simply code for ignoring the scientific evidence, shortchanging the process and trying to stop all commercial activity in the region.

While we recognize there is a strong national interest in the Arctic and in Alaska, we sincerely hope that you will listen to the Alaskan congressional delegation before you take any actions that will have a significant impact on our state and residents.

Sincerely,

		
<u>Lisa Murkowski</u> United States Senator	<u>Mark Begich</u> United States Senator	<u>Don Young</u> Congressman for all Alaska

Copy:

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